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SONNETS

BY THE REV.

CHARLES TURNER

VICAR OF GRASBY, LINCOLN



London and Cambridge
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1864

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LONDON

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NEW-STREET SQUARE



TO
ALFRED TENNYSON

THESE SONNETS

ARE INSCRIBED

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE BROTHER

CHARLES TURNER

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SONNETS.

PREFATORY.

I dreamed I wrote an ode, and was not slack
To bring it where two mighty umpires dealt
The prize; but deep-mouthed Pindar bade me back,
And laughing Horace—like a boy I felt,
Who, idly thrumming on a single hair,
Stretched from his forehead, with his simple head
And child's ear close upon it, fancy-fed,
Conceits himself a harpist then and there;
I woke, and murmured o'er a humbler strain,
A sonnet—smiling at my classic dream—
But still I may misuse some honest theme,
Tinkling this idle outgrowth of my brain;
A hair amid the harpstrings! my weak words
May pass unheard among the rolling chords.

GREAT LOCALITIES. AN ASPIRATION.

Oft do I muse in castle-building hours—
O! might some trick o' the air advance the hill
Of Sion westward, I would gaze my fill
Upon her far-projected walls and towers!
O! that the realms our rounded earth doth hide,
Could, maugre all the horizons, be displayed
To my rapt eyes and heart—o'er land and tide
By some intense refractive power conveyed!
For I am bound by duties and constraints
To mine own land, or move in modest round
Among my neighbours; tho' my spirit faints
And hungers for the storied eastern ground:
Cease, dreamer! is it fit the laws of space
And vision should be strained to meet thy case?

Continued.

But, if it were, how soon Jerusalem
Should front my homestead with her mountain-hold!
And ever-listening hills of Bethlehem
Report themselves in colours clear and bold!
Then would I summon here old Cheops' tomb,
With its broad base to flank my bordering wood—
A mighty phantom! pressing for the room
It holds in Egypt! next, with change of mood,
Fair Athens should be welcomed, and the rest
Of those immortal cities, one by one;
And, for my latest atmospheric guest,
I'd bid that crumbled mound from Babylon
Come looming up at sundown, with the moan
Of evening winds, and shadows from the west.

Continued.

Nor—could I bring within my visual scope
The great localities old stories boast—
Would I forget thee, Troas ! whose first hope
Of travel pointed to thy lonely coast ;
How would my quicken'd fancy reproduce
Th' incessant brazen flash of Homer's war,
And heroes moving quick their ground to choose,
With spear-tops burning like the autumn star,
Along that sullen sea-board ! till, at length,
Mine ear should thrill, my startled pulses bound,
When from the trench those two grand voices rose—
And each involved in th' other, swept their foes
Before them, like a storm—the wrath and strength
Of God and man conspiring to the sound !

TOKEN LIGHTS. A CONTRAST.

Of old, when Greek and Trojan took the field,
Before a lance was thrown or goat-horn bended,
The god, who on some favourite chief attended,
Lit up a sudden flame from helm and shield ;
We need no palpable approach of fire,
No visual intimation to be made,
Nor do we with our natural eyes require
To test our Guardian-God's protecting aid ;
From holier heavens our token-lights descend
Upon our Christian weapons, zeal and love,
To embolden and support us to the end
Of that great war thro' which we daily move ,
To raise our drooping hearts and give us sight
Of our great Master's presence in the fight.

GREAT LOCALITIES. ROME.

Keen was the vision which Ambition lent
To Rome's great captains, when the vacant realm
Was waiting for a chief to seize the helm,
And their stern martial looks were southward bent
From Gaul or Britain, like a wizard's gaze
Constraining some weak victim to his harm,
While yet the nations had no countercharm
Against a despot's eye, in those fierce days;
The city of their greed seemed well-nigh theirs,
Half in their grasp, full clearly bodied forth;
My Rome should softly float into the north
At my fond wish, convoyed by gentle airs—
Rapt into Freedom's land a little while
From Pio's grief, and Antonelli's guile !

*THE MOSELLE BOATMAN AND HIS
DAUGHTER.*

Not high nor full enough to show things clear,
The half moon hung above the mountain-lines—
But, glancing on the waters, kindled there
A lamp of gold beneath the unseen vines ;
The night was fair, but, as our port we neared,
We sighed to lose the boatman and his mate,
Between whose patient faces we had sate,
The old man rowing, while his daughter steered ;
'Father,' she oft would say in accents mild,
Whene'er she asked advice, or craved reply
To some brief question, while, with loving eye,
He smiled and nodded to his wistful child,
Over his close-joined hands and labouring oar—
'Twas sad to think we ne'er might see them more !

Continued.

When first we took the stream, the maiden held
The oar, to keep her father's strength unworn
For midday labour ; but the sight compelled
Our pity, and the aid of pity born—
For at each stroke, whose ripples reached the land,
She rose up bodily, with toil and pain,
And often paused, and dipped her little hand,
To cool her brow, yet did she not complain ;
Full oft, in day-dreams of that sweet Moselle,
I seek my gentle Gretchen, and persuade
My questing memory that all goes well
At Alf, by Bertrich, with that village-maid,
Who, when the task her slender force outweighed,
Rose from her seat, to make her rowing tell.

*THE BLUSH OF CONSTANTINE AT THE
COUNCIL OF NICE.*

To that high Council gathered to compose
The troubled waters of the Church of Christ,
And with her noble words convince her foes,
Came the great monarch, faithful to his tryst :
But lo ! on entering, how his visage glows
With sudden reverence, that doth enlist
The sympathies of bishop, courtier, priest ;
Who gaze in tender silence on the rose
He brings to their first meeting, and address
Themselves with braver hearts to their grand cause ;
And, though in aftertimes his zeal grew less
For the pure creed of those, whose eyes he draws
All is congenial now. They find no flaw
In that king's-aspect, dashed with holy awe.

*CONSTANTINE'S AMPHITHEATRE AT
TRÈVES.*

This is the spot, where mighty Constantine,
 His pagan pride o'ermatching Christian thought,
 With his fair baths and palace did conjoin
 The vast arena where his captives fought :
 Strange ! that the first great prince who stood for God
 Should disaffect his new-won creed so far,
 As thus to dally with the lust of blood,
 And feed himself in peace with shows of war !
 Here, where the crowd, 'mid plaudits and alarms,
 With brief stern action seal'd the will of Rome,
 The vines outstretch their ever-floating arms,
 That mark no victim, and denounce no doom ;
 But round the ancient circuit waving stand,
 To swell the vintage of this peaceful land.

THE LION'S SKELETON.

How long, O lion, hast thou fleshless lain ?
What rapt thy fierce and thirsty eyes away ?
First came the vulture: worms, heat, wind, and rain
Ensued, and ardors of the tropic day.
I know not—if they spared it thee—how long
The canker sate within thy monstrous mane,
Till it fell piecemeal, and bestrewed the plain ;
Or, shredded by the storming sands, was flung
Again to earth ; but now thine ample front,
Whereon the great frowns gathered, is laid bare ;
The thunders of thy throat, which erst were wont
To scare the desert, are no longer there ;
Thy claws remain, but worms, wind, rain, and heat
Have sifted out the substance of thy feet.

THE ARROW-KING.

How shall I picture forth the eagle's flight?
An arrow feather'd with two mighty vans,
That soars and stoops at will, and broadly scans
The woods and waters with a living sight!
A wondrous arrow! wheeling round and round,
Before its prone descent upon the prey,
Descried far off upon the subject ground,
And with one stroke disabled for the fray;
But lo! there comes a small, unpennon'd thing,
And, from the rifle's throat directly sped,
Is potent to bring down this arrow-king,
With slacken'd wing and self-abandon'd head.
His nearest foe is yonder human eye,
With no assailant else in earth or sky!

CYNOTAPHIUM.

When some dear human friend to death doth bow,
Fair blooming flowers are strewn upon the bier,
And haply, in the silent house, we hear
The last wild kiss ring on the marble brow,
And lips that never missed reply till now ;
And thou, poor dog, wert in thy measure dear—
And so I owe thee honour, and the tear
Of friendship, and would all thy worth allow.
In a false world, thy heart was brave and sound ;
So, when my spade carved out thy latest lair,
A spot to rest thee on, I sought and found—
It was a tuft of primrose, fresh and fair,
And, as it was thy last hour above ground,
I laid thy sightless head full gently there.

Continued.

‘I cannot think thine all is buried here,’
I said, and sighed—the wind awoke and blew
The morning-beam along the gossamer,
That floated o’er thy grave all wet with dew :
A hint of better things, however slight,
Will feed a loving hope ; it soothed my woe
To watch that little shaft of heavenly light
Pass o’er thee, moving softly to and fro :
Within our Father’s heart the secret lies
Of this dim world ; why should *we only* live
And what was I that I should close mine eyes
On all those rich presumptions, that relieve
The meanest life from dust and ashes ? Lo !
How much on such dark ground a gleaming thread
can do !

THE VACANT CAGE.

Our little bird in his full day of health
With his gold-coated beauty made us glad,
But when disease approached with cruel stealth,
A sadder interest our smiles forbade.
How oft we watched him, when the night hours came,
His poor head buried near his bursting heart,
Which beat within a puffed and troubled frame;
But he has gone at last, and played his part:
The seed-glass, slighted by his sickening taste.
The little moulted feathers, saffron-tipt,
The fountain, where his fever'd bill was dipt,
The perches, which his failing feet embraced
All these remain—not even his bath removed—
But where's the spray and flutter that we loved?

Continued.

He shall not be cast out like wild-wood things !
We will not spurn those delicate remains ;
No heat shall blanch his plumes, nor soaking rains
Shall wash the saffron from his little wings ;
Nor shall he be inearthed—but in his cage
Stand, with his innocent beauty unimpair'd ;
And all the skilled'st hand can do, to assuage
Poor Dora's grief, by more than Dora shared,
Shall here be done. What tho' those orbs of glass
Will feebly represent his merry look
Of recognition, when he saw her pass,
Or from her palm the melting cherry took—
Yet the artist's kindly craft shall not retain
The filming eye, and beak that gasped with pain.

TO THE LARK.

Published in 1830. Slightly altered.

And am I up with thee, light-hearted minion?
 Who never dost thine early flight forego,
 Catching for aye upon thy gamesome pinion
 What was to fill some lily's cup below—
 The morning shower-drops. What is half so thrilling
 As thy glad voice i' th' argent prime of light?
 Just risen from the nest where thou wert billing
 A moment since, and with thy mate in sight,
 Joy dwells with thee for ever—extasy—
 Beyond the murmuring bliss of doves or bees;
 And with such vocal token of wild ease
 Thou dost reveal thy proud immunity
 From mortal cares, that thou, perforce, must please;
 Fair fall thy rapid song, sweet bird, and thee!

*TO THE ROBIN.**Published in 1830. Slightly altered.*

The ox is all as happy, in his stall,
As when he lowed i' the summer's yellow eve,
Browsing the king-cup slopes ; but no reprieve
Is left for thee, save thy sweet madrigal,
Poor robin: and severer days will fall.
Bethink thee well of all yon frosted sward,
The orchard-path, so desolate and hard,
And meadow-runnels, with no voice at all !
Then feed with me, poor warbler, household bird,
And glad me with thy song so sadly tim'd,
And be on thankful ears thy lay conferr'd ;
So, till her latest rhyme my muse hath rhym'd,
Thy voice shall with a pleasant thrill be heard,
And with a poet's fear, when twigs are lim'd.

BIRD-NESTING.

Ah! that half bashful and half eager face!
 Among the trees thy guardian angel stands,
 With his heart beating, lest thy little hands
 Should come among the shadows and efface
 The stainless beauty of a life of love,
 And childhood innocence—for hark, the boys
 Are peering through the hedgerows and the grove,
 And ply their cruel sport with mirth and noise;
 But thou hast conquer'd! and dispell'd his fear;
 Sweet is the hope thy youthful pity brings—
 And oft, methinks, if thou shalt shelter here
 When these blue eggs are linnets' throats and wings,
 A secret spell shall bring about the tree
 The little birds that owed their life to thee.

THE LACHRYMATORY.

From out the grave of one whose budding years
Were cropt by death, when Rome was in her prime,
I brought the phial of his kinsman's tears,
There placed, as was the wont of ancient time ;
Round me, that night, in meads of asphodel,
The souls of th' early dead did come and go,
Drawn by that flask of grief, as by a spell,
That long-imprison'd shower of human woe ;
As round Ulysses, for the draught of blood,
The heroes thronged, those spirits flocked to me,
Where, lonely, with that charm of tears, I stood ;
Two, most of all, my dreaming eyes did see ;
The young Marcellus, young, but great and good,
And Tully's daughter, mourned so tenderly.

AN INCIDENT IN A CHURCH.

As one whose eyes, by gleam of waters caught,
Should find them strewn with pansies, so to me
It chanced that morning, as I bowed the knee,
Soliciting th' approach of hallowed thought ;
I dreamed not that so dear a tomb was nigh ;
My sidelong glance the lucid marble drew,
And, turning round about enquiringly,
I found it letter'd with the names I knew ;
Three precious names I knew, and lov'd withal,
Yea, knew and lov'd, albeit too briefly known—
Louisa, Henry, and the boy just grown
To boyhood's prime, as each receiv'd the call ;
And, over all, carv'd in the same white stone,
The symbol of the holiest death of all.

Continued.

TO THE SURVIVORS.

Henceforth to you this monument shall be
A bright and constant presence : evermore
Your thoughts of death must pass by this white door,
Till ye yourselves shall meet Eternity ;
This vestal tablet written o'er with love,
From morn to eve your inner eye shall read,
And even in midnight darkness ye shall prove
What heavenward hopes its snowy gleam can feed ;
Yes, ever in your hearts' clear depths shall lie
This fair tomb-shadow, when no ripple moves ;
And, when fresh rous'd to earthly sympathy,
Come floating softly o'er your living loves :
While I, not robbing you, may keep my share
Of that pure light which stole across my prayer.

*ON THE DEATH OF TWO LITTLE
CHILDREN.*

Ah ! bitter chance ! no hand the blow could ward !
Nor shield from harm her little guileless breast,
New to this perilous world, and daily prest
To a fond mother's heart ; her lot seems hard ;
But lo ! her face is calm—a gentle tone
Seems murmuring from those lips that breathe no more,
' Come, little sister, marked for heaven before !
I crave that hand, yet smaller than mine own,
That baby-hand, to clasp again in mine !'
Sweet spirit ! as thou wishest, it shall be ;
Death drops his wing on younger heads than thine,
Though thine is of the youngest ; soon to thee
The little sister of thy soul shall come,
And one low funeral bell shall bring ye home !

GODDARD AND LYCIDAS.

Two dirges by two poets have I read,
By two great masters of our English tongue ;
One for the youth who rests his drownèd head
Upon the mighty harp of him who sung
The loss of Eden ; and the other, warm
From Wordsworth's gentle heart, o'er Goddard's grave,
By Keller raised, near Zurich's stormy wave—
Both beautiful, with each its proper charm ;
The one so glorious—we are fain to blend
The name of Lycidas with that wild sea,
Where sank to deathless fame the poet's friend :
The other, with a humbler purpose penned,
Set one poor mother's stifled sorrows free,
And gained, by lowlier means, a sweeter end.

HOPE BENEATH THE WATERS.

‘I cannot mount to heaven beneath this ban :
Can Christian hope survive so far below
The level of the happiness of man ?
Can angels’ wings in these dark waters grow ?’
A spirit voice replied, ‘From bearing right
Our sorest burthens, comes fresh strength to bear ;
And so we rise again towards the light,
And quit the sunless depths for upper air :
Meek patience is as diver’s breath to all
Who sink in sorrow’s sea, and many a ray
Comes gleaming downward from the source of day,
To guide us reascending from our fall ;
The rocks have bruised thee sore, but angels’ wings
Grow best from bruises, hope from anguish springs.’

THE BUOY-BELL.

How like the leper, with his own sad cry
Enforcing his own solitude, it tolls !
That lonely bell set in the rushing shoals,
To warn us from the place of jeopardy !
O friend of man ! sore-vest by ocean's power,
The changing tides wash o'er thee day by day ;
Thy trembling mouth is filled with bitter spray,
Yet still thou ringest on from hour to hour ;
High is thy mission, though thy lot is wild—
To be in danger's realm a guardian sound ;
In seamen's dreams a pleasant part to bear,
And earn their blessing as the year goes round ;
And strike the key-note of each grateful prayer,
Breathed in their distant homes by wife or child !

THE RAINBOW.

Father of all ! Thou dost not hide Thy bond
As one that would disclaim it—on the cloud,
Or springing fount, or torrent's misty shroud,
Lord of the waters ! are thy tokens found ;
Thy promise lives about the ambient air,
And, ever ready at a moment's call,
Reports itself, in colours fresh and fair ;
And, where St. Lawrence rushes to his fall
In thunder, Thou dost tend his angry breath
Infusing it with rainbows :—one and all
The floods of this green earth attest Thy faith,
The rain, the fountain, and the watery wall—
And, badg'd with sweet remembrancers, they say,
' My word, once given, shall never pass away.'

ANASTASIS.

Tho' death met love upon thy dying smile,
And staid him there for hours, yet th' orbs of sight
So speedily resign'd their aspect bright,
That Christian hope fell earthward for awhile,
Appalled by dissolution ; but on high
A record lives of thine identity !
Thou shalt not lose one charm of lip or eye ;
The hues and liquid lights shall wait for thee,
And the fair tissues, wheresoe'er they be !
Daughter of heaven ! our grieving hearts repose
On the dear thought that we once more shall see
Thy beauty—like Himself our Master rose—
So shall that beauty its old rights maintain,
And thy sweet spirit own those eyes again.

THE DEATH-SMILE OF COWPER.

‘O orphan smile! born since our mourner died—
We ever long’d for thee, but saw thee not,
Till now, in posthumous beauty; nought beside
Could have so moved us, while our tears were hot
And thrilling. Art thou not to each sad friend
The symbol of a long-desired release?
A lovely prelude of immortal peace,
Now that the storm of life has reached its end?’
Fresh from kind Hayley’s page these words I wrote,
As though I lean’d o’er Cowper, and beheld,
As present fact, what I from records quote;
By rapture of pure sympathy impell’d
To join those first eye-witnesses, and note
A death-smile, and the sorrow that it quelled.

APPREHENSION OF BLINDNESS.

When first upon mine eyes the darkness came,
I said, ' Will this dull film be always here,
To chide mine eyes with a perpetual fear ?
Or will the blind man's lot my spirit tame ?'
Ah ! thankless heart ! and words which bring me shame
To think of ; for a better time was near,
And wiser thoughts, which daily grow more dear,
With deep remorse for that unholy blame :
This web that falls and rises—Heaven be praised !
Thro' its dark meshes I can read Thy Word :
Dim holy hopes have dawned where sunshine blazed
Unheeded ; O sweet twilight undeplord !
O floating veil ! full gently dropt and raised
By the good hand of Jesus Christ my Lord !

LOSS AND RESTORATION OF SMELL.

Dull to the year's first odours, I rebelled
Against the law which doom'd the violets
E'er I had smelt them ; but, ere long, I held
A quicken'd nostril over all the sweets
Of the full summer—for I had besought
The All-Giver to restore my blunted sense;
Humbly I pray'd, and breath of roses brought
The answer. O ! it was a joy intense,
After that dreary interval of loss.
I laughed, I ran about as one possessed ;
And now that winter seems my hopes to cross,
I snuff the very frost with happy zest,
Proud of recovered power, and fain to win
Fresh triumphs for it, when the Spring comes in.

ON THE STATUE OF LORD BYRON,

By Thorwaldsen, in Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

'Tis strange that I, who haply might have met
 Thy living self—who sought to hide the flaws
 In thy great fame, and, though I ne'er had set
 Eyes on thee, heard thee singing without pause,
 And long'd to see thee, should, alas! detect
 The Thyrsa-sorrow first on sculptur'd brows,
 And know thee best in marble! Fate allows
 But this poor intercourse; high and erect
 Thou hold'st thy head, whose forward glance beholds
 All forms that throng this learned vestibule;
 Women and men, and boys and girls from school,
 Who gaze with admiration all uncheck'd
 On thy proud lips, and garment's moveless folds,
 So still, so calm, so purely beautiful!

Continued.

And near thee hangs a page, in boyhood penn'd,
When all thy thoughts were, like thy marble, pure ;
When thou hadst none but little faults to mend,
In Lochnagar's cool shadow still secure
From praise or slander ; but thy brilliant youth
And manhood soon took tribute of thy kind ;
Great artists then thy lineaments designed,
And, last, the Dane's fine chisel struck the truth ;
And, when the current of the breath of fame
Drew up all relics of the master's craft,
This little page,—we know not whence it came,—
Ran flitting forward in the mighty draught,
And, placed at last, where it was fain to be,
Shares our fond gaze between itself and thee.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,

According to her Advocates.

Thou pleadest well, yet some will say, and weep
 To say it: 'See, the fond historian stands
 Chafing the blood from Mary's snowy hands
 In vain, for still their ancient stains they keep ;'
 I join them not—I, too, am fain to think
 That thou hast wrought a credible disproof
 Of that old verdict. Shall I hold aloof,
 And shut my heart up from the veriest blink
 Of charitable sunshine, that descends
 On this still-closing, still-re-opening bud
 Of unproved innocence? O Holyrood!
 Speak, for thou knowest! Tell the means, the ends,
 Of that dark conclave! All good spirits move
 The lost truth to the light; it is a work of love!

Continued.

When the young hand of Darnley locked in her's
Had knit her to her northern doom—amid
The spousal pomp of flags and trumpeters,
Her fate look'd forth and was no longer hid ;
A jealous brain beneath a southern crown
Wrought spells upon her ; from afar she felt
The waxen image of her fortunes melt
Beneath the Tudor's eye, while the grim frown
Of her own lords o'ermaster'd her sweet smiles—
And nipt her growing gladness, till she mourned,
And sank, at last, beneath their cruel wiles ;
But, ever since, all generous hearts have burned
To clear her fame, yea, very babes have yearned
Over this saddest story of the isles.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Yet our Elizabeth stood out alone,
Shielding the faith—though tarnished thus with crime,
When any darknesss fell upon the time,
She heard the Jesuit's foot steal near the throne ;
When man and nature felt the advancing stress
Of that great armament, her mighty soul
Quailed not, and England from her steadfastness
Took heart—right-royal was her self control ;
Thames held his state ; bold headlands of the coast
Sent winds to chafe the foe, that, hinting wreck,
Puft at each tilting prow and tower'd deck,
Till fuller tempests squander'd all their host,
And, like a pack that overruns the scent,
Far to the north their scurrying vessels went !

THE ORDER OF THE STAR OF INDIA.

‘The star of India!’ ’tis a goodly name—
Due to a fuller honour, purer love,
Than we, defaulters to our trust, can claim :
Yet sure its choice was prompted from above ;
Part-offspring of our civil hopes and fears,
Perchance its *style* is loftier than its *birth* ;
But seen by wistful eyes thro’ holy tears,
It lengthens out its beams and lights the earth ;
We hail it as the herald of the day,
Earth’s noblest badge, and knighthood’s brightest prize ;
The spirit of Havelock, the pure and wise,
Leans forward to salute it on its way—
And sainted Heber, with a glad surprise
Sees from Almorah’s hill its rising ray.

Continued.

I dreamed—methought I stood upon a strand
Unblest with day for ages ; and despair
Had seized me, but for cooling airs that fann'd
My forehead, and a voice that said ‘ Prepare ! ’
Anon I felt a dawning was at hand ;
A planet rose, whose light no cloud could mar,
And made thro’ all the landscape near and far,
A wild half-morning for that dreary land ;
I saw her seas come washing to the shore
In sheets of gleaming ripples, wide and fair ;
I saw her goodly rivers brimming o’er,
And from their fruitful shallows looked the star ;
And all seem’d kissed with star-light ! till the beam
Of sunrise broke and yet fulfill’d my dream.

A THOUGHT FOR MARCH 1860.

Yon happy blackbird's note the rushing wind
Quells not, nor disconcerts his golden tongue,
That breaks my morning dream with well-known song;
How many a roaring March I've left behind,
Whose blasts, all-spirited with notes and trills,
Blew over peaceful England! and, ere long,
Another March will come these hills among,
To clash the lattices and whirl the mills:
But what shall be ere then? Ambition's lust
Is broad awake, and gazing from a throne
But newly set, counts half the world his own;
All ancient covenants aside are thrust,
Old landmarks are like scratches in the dust,
His eagles wave their wings, and they are gone.

*AUTOCRATIC POLICY OF THE FEDERAL
AMERICANS.*

At length, a fierce autocracy is seen
Install'd aloft in Freedom's very seat ;
A throne built on the anger of defeat—
A virtual crown accorded in a spleen ;
The North, which brawled for Freedom and her rights :
The North, which talk'd so big of brotherhood,
Hath dared for very rage a hundred fights,
When once her will was traversed ! Once withstood,
She opened condor's wings, and cried for blood :
And soared at once to sheer despotic heights—
And so we see, O saddest of all sights !
A ravening temper, deaf to all things good ;
While the poor slaves, cajoled by warring whites,
Drift between North and South like floating wood.

*POSSIBLE RESULTS OF THE FRIENDS'
MISSION TO ST. PETERSBURG.*

*In the Message of Alexander II. to Congress at the beginning of
the war.*

Whatever be the meaning of that creed
Of the poke-bonnet and the ample brim,
Still in the shoes of truth the Quakers tread,
When they denounce our wars: forget the prim
Staid aspect of these worthy gentlemen,
While purely, honestly, for peace they plead;
Nor think it shame to propagate the seed
Sown by the sober hands of William Penn;
Perchance—when to that Northern court they went,
They left some saddening thoughts of death and war;
And can we think their words were idly spent,
If that sweet message of the younger Czar
To deaf Americans, were meant to endorse,
By the son's act, the father's late remorse?

Continued.

Prove his own love of peace and sanction theirs,
The very quaintness of that precedent,
Which sought to baulk a warrior-king's intent
By quiet looks, and unofficial prayers,—
Blended with somewhat chivalrous and bold,
Even in the very act of their appeal
To him, full autocrat from head to heel,
Sworn to his own great plans, a lifetime old—
Might hit his fancy with a pleasant zest,
Might haunt his memory with a dim control,
Among a thousand thoughts the last and best,
While that stern leaguer of Sebastopol
Alternately exalted, and deprest,
Day after day, the balance of his soul.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1862.

The great Exchanges press each other's heels,
Like the swift seasons or the swifter moons,
All Europe through—and every nation feels
This kindly intercourse the best of boons ;
The paths of peace and commerce, from all sides,
Lie straight for England, like old Roman ways ;
Hither the railway brawls, the steamboat glides,
The desert-ship is steered, the sledge-dog bays !
Brought to the coast, and then disburthen'd there,
The o'erladen camel's spongy foot springs home
To its old span, while with a witless stare
He eyes the sea-board and the barks that come
To float his burthen off to the world's Fair :
The dog returns in snowy wilds to roam.

Continued.

They snuff the breath of intervening seas,
And know no more of London, but the man
Ardent, competitive, and large of plan,
Brings all his spirit to such marts as these ;
The portorage of sea and land is claimed,
All common means we mend and multiply ;
Let not these bold preparatives be shamed,
These energies of hope advance to die !
O Art and Commerce, set the nations free,
And bid the rites of war's proud temples cease !
O power of steam ! for ever may'st thou be
A rolling incense in the house of peace !
And all these vast consignments but increase
Our sense of brotherhood and charity !

*HEBRON.**The Prince of Wales's Visit.*

Long had the Saracen with ruthless arms,
Denied all access to this place of awe;
Next came the Christian Church, with holy psalms
Charming the gloom of hollow Machpelah:
Anon, the votaries of Mohammed's name,
Returning, trod the desecrated floors,
And, in the gusts through those re-opening doors,
The dreary Moslem voices went and came
In Jacob's ears! But now a step draws nigh,
A sound to reassure the patriarch's heart
With promise of the coming time, and start
The cerements from the hollow of his thigh,
As tho' the angel called: for lo! they meet—
The 'Ladder' and the 'Cross,' with promise sweet!

Continued.

How doth the Crescent brook this mighty change?
Sharpening those idle horns she cannot fill,
She peers with keen regret on that old range
Of tombs, and marks them for seclusion still;
But Nippon and Cathay are entered now
On their new course, and shall the Turk's proud will
Reclose our unsealed Hebron? and avow
Their stern monopoly of El Khalil?
Help! England, lend the shelter of thy love—
And let the firm stress of thy brooding wing
Be felt by those bold hands that would remove
Thy fond protective strength, which soon shall bring
These graves within the scope of Christian eyes,
And let poor Israel share the new-won prize.

Continued.

And when the coveted blessing is once gained,
And Israel to his father's tomb shall come,
By Christian aid recovered and maintained,
Oh may his heart for Christian hope find room !
And, as he leans and listens, inly thrilled,
May that dark chasm give forth One mystic word :
Oh ! may that beating heart and ear be filled
With one deep whisper, ' Jesus Christ is Lord ! '
And as both Jew and Christian take their turn
To gaze, with kindly interchange of place,
Led up by Love, may hood-winkt Faith return,
Clear of the Talmud, and with open face ;
For Charity shall pave the way for Grace,
The pupil of pure love is quick to learn.

*THE TELEGRAPH CABLE TO INDIA.**Anticipative.*

How all the old ways of intercourse have ceased,
 Or well-nigh ceased—and we have lived to see
 The word of England rapt into the East
 Beneath the rolling waters! Can it be?
 Yea, and thro' lawless regions which we guard
 And subsidize; the Arab and the Turk
 Are bound by stress of state, or gross reward,
 To aid the mystic courier at its work
 'Twixt land and sea; soon, without wave or wind,
 Our statesmen shall despatch their 'how' and 'why'—
 And charge the lightning with their policy;
 Nor shall our home-affections lag behind;
 For all that longs, and loves, and craves reply,
 Shall move the needle on the shores of Ind.

*THE SOUTH-FORELAND ELECTRIC
LIGHT.*

From Calais pier I saw a brilliant sight,
 And from the sailor at my side besought
 The meaning of that fire, which pierc'd the night
 With lustre, by the foaming billows caught.
 ' 'Tis the South Foreland ! ' I resumed my gaze
 With quicker pulse, thus, on the verge of France,
 To come on England's brightness in advance !
 There ! on the waters ! In those far-seen rays
 I hail'd the symbol of her fame in fight :
 But, by a change akin to that which brought
 The lightning under rule, the martial thought
 Flashed itself out, transform'd to quiet light ;
 I turned to all the good she did and taught,
 Her shining honour and her moral might.

GREATNESS OF ENGLAND.

Full long ere Europe knew the iron road,
The 'Railway' thundered on our English soil ;
There was a trembling in the sea-girt isle,
Where 'Hercules' or mighty 'Samson' trod,
Heavy and swift ; for Nature bore our yoke
Far earlier than elsewhere : we freed the slave
To take the lightning captive ; hearts of oak,
Of closest grain, the stalwart and the brave,
Thrill'd at the touch of science ; letters lent
Their gentle aid to feed the hungry strength
Of British minds with genial nourishment ;
And still these powers bear rule throughout the length
And breadth o' the land. The thought is rife with pride :
Perchance the ebb comes next. We stand at full of tide.

THE WIND-BOUND MISSION.

‘Deep in the West the godless Mormons dwell,
In the far East the Taepings waste and burn,
And stamp the name of Christ on deeds of hell—
Ah me ! for comfort whither shall I turn,
While East and West breed mockeries like these ?’
I turned to Livingstone, on Afric’s soil
Labouring, and good Mackenzie’s holy toil,
And Selwyn praying for the southern seas—
But never thought more tender and sublime
To any bleeding anxious heart was given,
Than when I learned that not a wind-bound sail,
Near this rough foreland, waits the favouring gale,
But Christian men observe the vacant time,
Stand in the baffling wind and speak of heaven !

THE THAW-WIND.

Thro' the deep drifts the south wind breathed its way
Down to the earth's green face ; the air grew warm,
The snow-drops had regain'd their lonely charm ;
The world had melted round them in a day :
My full heart long'd for violets—the blue arch
Of heaven—the blackbird's song—but Nature kept
Her stately order—Vegetation slept—
Nor could I force the unborn sweets of March
Upon a winter's thaw. With eyes that brook'd
A narrower prospect than my fancy crav'd,
Upon the golden aconites I look'd,
And on the leafless willows as they wav'd—
And on the broad leav'd, half-thaw'd ivy-tod,
That glitter'd, dripping down upon the sod.

AN APRIL DAY.

The lark sung loud ; the music at his heart
Had called him early ; upward straight he went,
And bore in nature's quire the merriest part,
As to the lake's broad shore my steps I bent ;
The waterflies with glancing motion drove
Their dimpling eddies in among the blooms
Shed by the flowering poplars from above ;
While, overhead, the rooks, on sable plumes,
Floated and dipt about the gleaming haze
Of April, crost anon by April glooms,
As is the fashion of her changeful days ;
When, what the rain-cloud blots, the sun relumes,
O' the instant, and the shifting landscape shows
Each change, and, like a tide, the distance comes
and goes !

THE CHARMING OF THE EAST WIND.

Late in the month a rough east wind had sway,
The old trees thundered, and the dust was blown ;
But other powers possessed the night and day,
And soon he found he could not hold his own ;
The merry ruddock whistled at his heart,
And strenuous blackbirds pierced his flanks with song,
Pert sparrows wrangled o'er his every part,
And thro' him shot the larks on pinions strong :
Anon a sunbeam broke across the plain,
And the wild bee went forth on booming wing—
Whereat he feeble waxed, but rose again
With aimless rage, and idle blustering ;
The south wind touched him with a drift of rain,
And down he sank, a captive to the spring !

*SUMMER EVENING. RETIREMENT OF A
• GARDEN.*

'Scaped from the day's long heats and hustling crowds,
How much for that sweet silence I condon'd!
The gold moon glimpsed from out faint-stirring clouds,
And near the nested bird the beetle dron'd;
Pensive upon my garden-chair I sate,
And gave my spirit up to evening dreams,
Haunted by fragments of that meagre chat,
That held so long, and touched such weary themes,
All worthless! Near me lay that burial sod
Where to a shining thread such power was given;
A little, aimless, ferrying, light that stood,
And moved and stood again, at random driven,
But made, by hope, significant for good,
It plies, henceforth, between that hope and heaven.

*FULVIA,**or**Supposed Thoughts of a Hooted Candidate in his Garden.*

Welcome, ye shades of summer eve, that close
My day among the tongues of yonder town !
I would not pluck them out nor pin them down,
As vengeful Fulvia did with Cicero's—
Nor to mere petulance of speech assign
The cruel meed of his rare excellence—
Enough for me this stillness, and the sense
That they no longer vex these ears of mine ;
I will not vent my rage on foolish lungs,
Nor, even in fancy, re-enact the deed
Wreak'd on the Roman, in the stress and need
Of a great anger ; why should ribald songs
Scourge like impeaching eloquence ? or why
Should either tax our needles for reply ?

Continued.

'Twas but a moment's ire—the next, withstood—
Yet, in that moment, how my hungry spleen
Ran to the fierce triumvir's wife for food,
Through the long lapse of centuries between !
And, by that ready reference, proved its kin ;
Strange ! how my angry mood sped back through time
To gust my fancy with the ancient crime ;
Impracticable thought ! unwelcome sin !
I gauged again the depth of years, and found
My Master, pleading in His hour of grief,
For friends who did not minister relief,
And foes who mocked Him, and stood brawling round
His divine silence !—How distinct they were,—
The woman's vengeance and the Saviour's prayer !

*AN APPLICATION OF THE WAXING
MOON.*

O fair full moon ! that did'st embay the dark
With slender horns, when first my vow was made ;
I saw thee grow, half-trustful, half-afraid,
But still prest onward to my goal and mark ;
Hard task was mine ! the true prayer to be prayed—
The bidding back of all my coward fears—
The ointment to be bought, the homage paid—
The feet of Jesus to be kissed with tears.
Yet soon the creeping shade will come again,
And drown thy snowy forelands night by night ;
For thy sole function is to wax and wane :
But faith must keep her victories of light,
Else were it better far to see thee shine,
With comfortable eyes of sheep and kine.

THE PLANET AND THE TREE.

The evening breeze is blowing from the lea
Upon the fluttering elm ; thou hast a mind,
O star ! methinks, to settle in the tree—
But, ever baffled by the pettish wind,
Thou movest back and forward, and I find
A pastime for my thoughts in watching thee ;
In thy vast orbit thou art rolling now,
And wottest not how to my human eye
Thou seemest flouted by a waving bough,
Serving my fancy's needs right pleasantly ;
Thou wottest not—but He who made thee knows
Of all thy fair results both far and near,
Of all thine earthly, all thine heavenly shows—
The expression of thy beauty there and here.

HESPERUS.

‘ Shine on the sister planet at thy side,’
The Maker said, when first the worlds were made,
Just as our Hesperus began to glide
Along the path His prescient wisdom laid;
‘ Shine on the earth, the home of sin to be ;
The sorrowing eyes of man will need thy light ;
Enter his guilty darkness night by night,
And symbolize his long-lost purity.’
Such is the story of our Evening Star,
As some fond muse might tell it—but, indeed,
’Tis God’s own truth that all things near and far
Were made for eyes to see, and hearts to read—
So comes it ever, as the twilights fall,
Sweet Hesperus shines forth for me, for all !

NIGHTINGALES.

What spirit moves the quiring nightingales
To utter forth their notes so soft and clear ?
What purport hath their music, which prevails
At midnight, thrilling all the darkened air ?
'Tis said, some weeks before the hen-birds land
Upon our shores, their tuneful mates appear ;
And, in that space, by hope and sorrow spann'd,
Their sweetest melodies 'tis ours to hear ;
And is it so ? for solace till they meet,
Does this most perfect chorus charm the grove ?
Do these wild voices, round me and above,
Of amorous forethought and condolence treat ?
Well may such lays be sweetest of the sweet,
That aim to fill the intervals of Love !

A NIGHT THOUGHT.

O snowy star ! which I all night have eyed,
As some poor girl her lover's moon-lit sail,
Bound for the outer sea at early tide—
The rosy billows and the morning gale—
I grieve to lose thee ! for the night will fail
And thou be gone at dawning ; but, to-night,
Thou fill'st my cup of tears with silver light,
And lustres of regret serene and pale :
Thou dost express and symbolize the whole
Of those deep thoughts that pierce me and refine ;
But see ! the daytime comes with all its dole !
Ah ! woody hills and autumn-tints divine !
Ah ! mournful eyes ! Ah ! sad poetic soul !
Ah ! beauteous thoughts and fatal woes of mine !

RESUSCITATION OF FANCY.

The edge of thought was blunted by the stress
Of the hard world ; my fancy had wax'd dull,
All nature seemed less nobly beautiful,—
Robbed of her grandeur and her loveliness ;
Methought the Muse within my heart had died,
Till, late, awaken'd at the break of day,
Just as the East took fire and doff'd its grey,
The rich preparatives of light I spied ;
But one sole star—none other anywhere—
A wild-rose odour from the fields was borne ;
The lark's mysterious joy fill'd earth and air,
And from the wind's top met the hunter's horn ;
The aspen trembled wildly, and the morn
Breath'd up in rosy clouds, divinely fair !

THE FOREST GLADE.

As one dark morn I trod a forest glade,
A sunbeam entered at the further end,
And ran to meet me thro' the yielding shade—
As one, who in the distance sees a friend,
And, smiling, hurries to him ; but mine eyes,
Bewildered by the change from dark to bright,
Received the greeting with a quick surprise
At first, and then with tears of pure delight ;
Forsad my thoughts had been—the tempest's wrath
Had gloomed the night, and made the morrow grey ;
That heavenly guidance humble sorrow hath,
Had turned my feet into that forest-way,
Just when His morning light came down the path,
Among the lonely woods at early day.

*THE PROCESS OF COMPOSITION.**An Illustration.*

Oft in our fancy an uncertain thought
 Hangs colourless, like dew on bents of grass,
 Before the morning o'er the field doth pass ;
 But soon it glows and brightens ; all unsought
 A sudden glory flashes thro' the dream,
 Our purpose deepens and our wit grows brave,
 The thronging hints a richer utterance crave,
 And tongues of fire approach the new-won theme ;
 A subtler process now begins—a claim
 Is urged for order, a well-balanced scheme
 Of words and numbers, a consistent aim ;
 The dew dissolves before the warming beam ;
 But that fair thought consolidates its flame,
 And keeps its colours, hardening to a gem.

MORNING.

It is the fairest sight in Nature's realms,
To see on summer morning, dewy-sweet,
That very type of freshness, the green wheat,
Surging thro' shadows of the hedgerow elms ;
How the eye revels in the many shapes
And colours which the risen day restores !
How the wind blows the poppy's scarlet capes
About his urn ! and how the lark upsoars !
Not like the timid corn-craik scudding fast
From his own voice, he with him takes his song
Heavenward, then, striking sideways, shoots along,
Happy as sailor boy that, from the mast,
Runs out upon the yard-arm, till at last
He sinks into his nest, those clover tufts among.

THE LATTICE AT SUNRISE.

As on my bed' at dawn I mused and prayed,
I saw my lattice pranked upon the wall,
The flaunting leaves and flitting birds withal—
A sunny phantom interlaced with shade ;
'Thanks be to heaven,' in happy mood I said,
'What sweeter aid my matins could befall
Than this fair glory from the East hath made?
What holy sleights hath God, the Lord of all,
To bid us feel and see ! we are not free
To say we see not, for the glory comes
Nightly and daily, like the flowing sea ;
His lustre pierceth through the midnight glooms ;
And, at prime hour, behold ! He follows me
With golden shadows to my secret rooms !'

WIND ON THE CORN.

Full open as I rove by path or style,
To watch the harvest ripening in the vale,
Slowly and sweetly, like a growing smile—
A smile that ends in laughter—the quick gale
Upon the breadths of gold-green wheat descends ;
While still the swallow, with unbaffled grace,
About his viewless quarry dips and bends—
And all the fine excitement of the chase
Lies in the hunter's beauty: In the eclipse
Of that brief shadow, how the barley's beard
Tilts at the passing gloom, and wild-rose dips
Among the white-tops in the ditches reared :
And hedgerow's flowery breast of lacework stirs
Faint'y in that full wind that rocksth' outstanding firs

HARVEST-HOME.

Late in September came our corn-crops home,
Late, but full-ear'd—by many a merry noise
Of matron and of maid, young girls and boys,
Preceded, flank'd, and followed, did they come ;
A general joy ! for piles of unwrought food
For man and beast, on those broad axles prest,
And strained those sinewy necks in garlands drest ;
The harebell and the ragwort wondering stood
As the slow teams wound up that grassy lane ;
All knew the husbandman's long task was done ;
While, as they crost his disk, the setting sun
Blazed momentarily betwixt each rolling wain
And that which follow'd, pil'd with golden grain,
As if to gratulate the harvest won.

CEASING OF THE STORM.

The storm had well nigh gone ; no fitful blast
Lifted the weeping willow into heaven,
To let it fall and weep again, downcast ;
How often is such fickle comfort given !
How peaceful seemed the far up floating rook,
Crossing with jetty wing the full white cloud,
As to the blue beyond his way he took ;
While, in the grove, a lingering breeze allowed
The sight to catch, 'mid play of wind and sun,
The uncertain shadows of that woodland nook,
Swallowing the silent shafts of light that run
Along the spider's thread ; on nature's book
I love to pore, and mark what soars on high,
Or lurks in bye-paths for the observant eye.

TIME AND TWILIGHT.

In the dark twilight of an autumn morn
I stood within a little country-town,
Wherefrom a long acquainted path went down
To the dear village haunts where I was born ;
The low of oxen on the rainy wind,
Death and the Past, came up the well-known road,
And bathed my heart with tears, but stirred my mind
To tread once more the track so long untrod ;
But I was warned, ' Regrets which are not thrust
Upon thee, seek not ; for this sobbing breeze
Will but unman thee ; thou art bold to trust
Thy woe-worn thoughts among these roaring trees,
And gleams of by-gone playgrounds—Is't no crime
To rush by night into the arms of Time ?'

DREAMS.

Most dreams are like the tide upon the beach
Rolling the baseless pebbles, till their place
Is changed and changed again, beyond the reach
Of the best waking memory to retrace
The loose and helpless motion ; these, and those
That stand like rocks, engraved with name and date,
And cognizable words of coming fate,
What mean they ? who among our schoolmen knows ?
What means this double power to rave and teach ?
This common fund of toys and verities ?
Of dooming oracles and foolish cries ?
Now kept apart, now blending each with each—
Abortive interests, and unreal ties,
And prophecies no daylight can impeach ?

*THE MARBLE LANDING.**An Incident at Spezzia.*

They sunk a graven stone into the ground
Where first our Garibaldi's ship was moor'd,
Whereon an angry record of his wound
Beneath those fair memorial lines, was scor'd;
At night th' accusing tablet was replac'd
By one, discharg'd of that injurious word,
That pierced the general bosom like a sword,
Belied their love, their common hope disgrac'd.
Lie firm, thou latest-written rock ! his meed
Of honour should be neighbour'd by no groan
Of party spleen—perish the bitter seed
In the pure marble furrow vainly sown !
Why brand with purpos'd hate a casual deed
That made our hero's noble patience known ?

*THE LANDING OF KING GEORGE I. OF
GREECE AT THE PIRÆUS.*

Nature and man should join with one accord
To celebrate this purer second birth
Of royalty—blue skies and attic mirth,
And boughs of myrtle round the guardian sword;
A double strength of purple on the hills,
And a wine-fount in mid-Athens! that each mouth
May quaff the young king's health, and slake the drouth
Of that long-drawn Bavarian term of ills;
And you, Ionian isles! when Adria's wave
Comes foaming in before the Danish prows,
Remember England, ruling but to save,
And how she listen'd to your earnest vows;
Remember England in that night's carouse,
For what her mighty hand, unfolding, gave!

TO A FRIEND.

My low deserts consist not with applause
So kindly—when I fain would deem it so,
My sad heart, musing on its proper flaws,
Thy gentle commendation must forego ;
As toys, which, glued together, hold awhile,
But, haply brought too near some searching fire,
Start from their frail compacture, and beguile
The child, that pieced them, of his fond desire :
I was a very child for that brief tide,
Whenas I join'd and solder'd thy good word
With my poor merits—'twas a moment's pride—
The flames of conscience sunder'd their accord :
My heart dropt off in sorrow from thy praise,
Self-knowledge baulk'd self-love so many ways.

*ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S DESIGNS
AT BABYLON FRUSTRATED.*

He plied Hephæstion's ear with royal schemes
Over the wine-cup; hollow rang his voice
From barrier-rocks of Providence, and gleams
Of fatal fever lightened from his eyes;
He thought to build and drain with busy power—
But could not pass beyond the appointed goal;
For the strong ward of one prophetic scroll
Had frayed the horns of Ammon, and his hour
Drew nigh; Time sped—the bitterns thronged the
strand,
And shook the site of his imperial dream
With booming, and the dropsy of the land
Grew from the untended waters; evening's beam,
And morn's, looked down upon a realm of fear,
With pools and mounds and marshes far and near.

*JULIAN'S ATTEMPT TO BUILD ON THE
SITE OF THE TEMPLE.*

The crowd is climbing up the sacred hill
 With loud acclaim and music—shall we see
 Jehovah's irreversible decree
 Dogged into hiding by the Roman's will?
 Shall this proud king our Lord's own words gainsay?
 Nay—by that burst of sudden fire which sears
 The uplifted hand of labour! by the fears
 Of that vast crowd! By Christ and Moses, nay!
 The Apostate challenged God on His own ground;
 And as His prophet struck the fifties down,
 The baffled servants of that older crown—
 So now His flames their dazzled sense confound;
 For none but He, who did the like before,
 Shall change the story of Araunah's floor.

TERMINUS.

Upon the roll of folly and of crime
There lives a fact, for intellectual scorn—
But more for Christian pity, so forlorn
And abject stands it in the stream of Time !
The Imperial mandate ran, that, on a day,
Held sacred to the Lord of limitations,
The Christian faith should have its conquering way
Barred up, and so the disenchanted nations
Go back to Jove and Phœbus and the fanes ;
Messiah ! and the block-god Terminus !
O stolid humour ! O elaborate pains,
All lost and wasted ! for it is not thus
That truth is stopt ; Saints bled, but idols fell,
The Church bowed eastward still, and all was well.

MODERN TERMINI.

Again we see the obstructive rites decreed—
 This time by modern schools, a wrangling lot;—
 Each hopes his little god shall do the deed,
 The glorious deed—which Terminus did not!
 The master lectures, and the pupils quote,
 And noise abroad each fire-new theory,
 Or stale old sophism. How they rave and dote!
 And plant their idols where their Lord should be!
 Soon may we say, 'the heathen dream is past!
 The worship of these human blocks of stone,
 These heirs of Terminus, is failing fast!
 By history and reason overthrown;
 On their hard fronts the sunrise strikes in vain,
 No Memnon-chords have they in all their sorry grain!'

CHRIST AND ORPHEUS.

What means this vain ideal of our Lord,
With 'Orpheus' underwritten? Couldst thou see
With eyes of faith the Incarnate Deity,
That faith a nobler title would accord
Than this, whereat no Christian fancy warms;
Thou would'st not score the mythic harper's name
Beneath the fallen head and outstretched arms,
Nor seem to blink our dear Redeemer's claim
To His own cognizance and proper fame;
The sorrowing manhood of the King of kings,
The double nature, and the death of shame,
The tomb—the rising—are substantial things,
Irrelevant to Orpheus; What hath made
Thy wisdom match Messias with a shade?

Continued.

O give thy king no byenames! nor decry
The title proper to his native throne
Within our hearts, as tho' thou would'st deny
The authentic angel's voice which made it known;
'Tis treason to invalidate our creed
By understatements, partial, vague, and scant;
A faith in music is not what we want,
This sweet-toned mythus meets no sinner's need;
Come to the rescue, all who would not fuse
Redemption into harp-notes! nor exchange
For this new style our grand prescriptive use;
Nor seek, from flying leaves of legend strange,
To annotate Christ Jesus! till the next
Bold pen obtrudes the margin on the text.

Continued.

O friend, it is a deep religious loss
To palter with our Master's pure renown ;
To lose the sad precision of the Cross
In Fancy's lights, and melt away His crown ;
Gazing on truth, why should our vision swim ?
Let Calvary stand clear of fabulous mist,
Keep all the paths of Olivet for Christ,
And let no Orphic phantom walk with Him !
Then, and *then only*, welcome ! what they tell
Of that majestic harp, which came full-strung
Among the woes of Hades, to compel
A pause in all her penance—of the spell
Marred by a look—and of that faithful tongue,
Which Death and Hebrus strove in vain to quell.

ON CERTAIN BOOKS.

Faith and fixt hope these pages may peruse,
And still be faith and hope ; but, O ye winds !
Blow them far off from all unstable minds,
And foolish grasping hands of youth ! Ye dews
Of heaven ! be pleased to rot them where they fall,
Lest loitering boys their fancies should abuse,
And they get harm by chance, that cannot choose ;
So be they stained and sodden, each and all !
And if, perforce, on dry and gusty days,
Upon the breeze some truant leaf should rise,
Brittle with many weathers, to the skies,
Or flit and dodge about the public ways—
Man's choral shout, or organ's peal of praise
Shall shake it into dust, like older lies.

Continued.

Alas ! my friend, 'tis motive power one needs
And not these idle fancies ill-advised ;
Mere harness will not pull us up to Christ,
Without the strength of full and living creeds ;
These shiny morals are no match for sin,
These empty trappings are not force nor speed ;
What ! shall we hope the chariot race to win
With straps and head-stalls only ? To succeed
In that great race, to Faith alone is given—
On-looking Faith, whose object fires the will ;
And, as the distance shrinks 'twixt earth and heaven,
Glow with its motion, and bears forward still,
Because it marks the goal with steadfast eye,
While smart theosophies lose heart and die.

A DREAM.

I dreamed a morning dream—a torrent brought
From fruitless hills, was rushing deep and wide :
It ran in rapids, like impatient thought ;
It wheeled in eddies, like bewildered pride :
Bleak-faced Neology, in cap and gown,
Peered up the channel of the spreading tide,
As, with a starved expectancy, he cried,
‘ When will the Body of the Christ come down ? ’
He came—not It, but He ! no rolling waif
Tost by the waves—no drowned and helpless form—
But with unlapsing step, serene and safe,
As once He trod the waters in the storm ;
The gownsman trembled as his God went by—
I looked again, the torrent-bed was dry.

A WAKING THOUGHT.

No water-floods shall drown our Lord and King !
Nor shall those ancient organs of report,
His glorious Gospels, prove the tempest's sport ;
What makes me sure of what I boldly sing ?
Not my poor dreams ! tho', as the master wills,
They follow truth in darkness—'tis revealed
That no brief torrents, from the fruitless hills,
Shall make an ooze of our historic field,
For all mankind by Christ's own prowess won—
Not my poor dreams ! but all that lies between
That time and this—what is and what hath been—
The long array of all that hath been done
And suffered, since the Virgin bore her son—
The facts of ages, and the hopes of men !

Continued.

I tax not all with this unmanly hate
Of truth, for purer spirits stand without—
Meek men of reverent purpose, watch and wait,
And gaze in sorrow from the land of doubt.
Yes—gentle souls there be, who hold apart,
And long in silence for the day of grace ;
For deep in many a brave, though bleeding, heart
There lurks a yearning for the Healer's face—
A yearning to be free from hint and guess,
To take the blessings Christ is fain to give :
To all who dare not with their conscience strive,
To all who burn for this most dear success,
Faith shall be born ! and, by her natural stress,
Push through these dark philosophies, and live !

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

The old 'Paulus' Theory.

A fiction or a fact? an interview
 Of Christ with his own prophets? or a blink
 Of moonlight caught by dreaming eyes, that wink
 And wonder, and report what is not true?
 When will the impugnors of the Gospel claims
 The deep consistent likeness recognise
 Between his woes and glories? Living ties
 That bind in one His honours and His shames?
 For all coheres; His pangs and triumphs touch
 Each other, like the wings of Cherubim:
 Strange was His Birth—His death and rising, such
 As to bear out that strangeness—and as much
 May well be said of dark Gethsemane,
 That sternest link in the great unity.

GETHSEMANE.

Pursing his traitor lips he onward went,
The Apostle, with those harsh official men—
All on one cruel baleful thought intent,
To hunt the Lamb up from His sheltering glen,
O cruel conclave ! where those murderers met ;
O vile night-market ! where our Lord was sold
Among the sad gray olives, in His sweat,
Just risen from that awful prayer ; behold !
They lead Him forth, the Victim long foretold
To climb, like Isaac, up the fated hill :
And so God wrought Redemption—fold in fold
With hate and guile He wrapt His holy will,
Yet left that will still holy—nor approved
The sin He worked with, nor its curse removed.

THE CRITICS AT GETHSEMANE.

Ever here we meet the Critics. The deep grief,
 Which all imaginative Art would faint
 To express—the Angel's visit of relief—
 The God bowed earthward like some mourning saint—
 They tone down all in their unhappy way ;
 Distilling rose-tints from their Saviour's blood,
 The God-man's sweat of anguish ! to portray
 Their sweet young Syrian—so divinely good,
 ' We must forgive His worshippers,' they say ;
 Not so the Church ! and tho' she needs must blush
 At her own feeble handling, yet alway,
 When she would paint her Master's darkest day,
 She takes the full-hued life-drop on her brush,
 And works, in simple faith, as best she may.

THE 'HIGHER CRITICISM.'

O Sophistry ! how many lips have kissed
And fondled thy puffed hand, bedaubed with ink
Of the 'higher criticism,' which does not shrink
To substitute, for our sound faith in Christ,
A dreamy, hollow, unsubstantial creed :
Strikes its small penknife through the covenants
Both old and new, and, in a trice, supplants
Without replacing, all we love and need ;
How blank will be thy scholarly regret
To see these blurred and shredded Gospels rise
Beyond the knives and ink-horns !—buoyant yet
With native strength, of which thou mad'st no count,
And, as heaven's lively oracles, confest
By all, disprove, perforce, each lying test.

ST. JOHN'S EAGLE.

He holds his course, he stoops not at command,
That stately-soaring Eagle of Saint John !
Though, all-agape, the learned critics stand
To lure him to their fancy-perch, upon
The lower rounds of time ; straight up he soars
From holy Zion ! bound by no Greek rules,
Nor held in leash by Alexandrian schools—
The mind of Christ, not Plato's, he explores ;
Sunward he hies. Ye sages, clear your ken,
See true for once, and register your sight ;
And in the note-books fretted by your pen,
While yet your eye-balls glow, the vision write :
And, when the unrighteous question stirs again,
Remember what you wrote as thoughtful men !

THE LUXOR NATIVITY.

A full-blown, modern, speculative sage
Is on us, crammed with Egypt—with his dream
Of Nile he seeks the folds of Bethlehem,
And writes 'from Luxor' on the sacred page;
The 'young child' came from Egypt; yet not so,
As this vain scribe would have it—not the son
Of an old Coptic frieze, but the Holy One
Of Israël; Virgin-born! O shame and woe!
But, O my Church, thou standest ever sure,
Though meteors through thine open portals glow,
Discolouring with strange lights, that come and go,
Thine altars, and thy fonts, and vestments pure—
Flashing their alien tinct on the true grain
Of thy great dogmas—Evermore in vain.

A NON-NATURAL CHRISTMAS.

O Christmas hollies! O thrice-blessed morn!
Again with thy dear message art thou come,
A word of joy to thousands, but to some
A fable among fables, 'Christ is born!'—
Hold off the hour to which our folly leans,
When priesthood in his own white robe shall stand
Forsworn—amid the faithful evergreens!
A thief—a traitor to his own right hand!
Once perjured and ordained, what follows next?
Whene'er, as preacher, to his flock he speaks,
The self-yoked sophist, fretting at his text,
Will rub against its meaning—while the weeks
And months drag on his hollow Christian year—
Woe to faint hearts! we must not falter here.

A NON-NATURAL EASTER.

Ill fares the priest to-day, who blinks the faith
 Of Easter, and, recoiling from the shock
 Of the great theme submitted to his flock,
 Reserves his thoughts about the Life and Death ;
 How false he feels when our high feast returns !
 While, in his pulpit, on his sidelong eye
 The chalice gleams, the great East window burns,
 The snow-white board obtrudes its purity ;
 And he must go and bless it—yea, he goes !
 Though covert ironies within him ask
 Whether, in very deed, our Day-star rose ;
 'Tis sad to see him how he takes his mask
 To meet the morning ! timid and untrue,
 And missing all the sweet airs and the dew !

*A NON-NATURAL ASCENSION AND
WHIT-SUNDAY.*

Christ leaves to-day the little gazing crowd
Upon the Mount, as straight to Heaven He fares;
O! let us follow Him with hymns and prayers
Up to the skirts of that receiving cloud;
But lo! the preacher hath no hope, no trust,
Nor can he, 'mid our coming Whitsun-songs,
Make common cause with all those fiery tongues
That hail the glories of the Pentecost;
But, if he ever thought it joy to meet
The faithful—if that memory thrills him yet—
Full surely must he feel some fond regret,
At parting with a creed so grand and sweet;
A grief, as when forsaken Olivet
Rolled sadly from beneath the Saviour's feet.

GERMAN AND FRENCH GOSPELS.

How do these eloquent lecturers of France,
And more uncouth expositors of lame
Teutonic Saviours, on our creeds advance,
And push, in crowds, for Messianic fame!
Some in 'great swaths' of learning and untruth
Utter themselves, and vent, in weary tomes,
Their cruel day-dreams, without pause or ruth,
Staunch to a worse apostacy than Rome's;
Others, in tenderer tones, our hopes decry,
And blight all careless hearts with moral death,
And, with sweet voices, summon us to die;
But, all alike, reduce our grand old faith,
Our full-orb'd creeds, to merest nuclei,
With atmospheres of philosophic breath!

LEBEN JESU AND VIE DE JESUS.

Hail, ancient creeds! that help us to disdain
 These 'Lives of Jesus;' you, that boldly speak
 Of an authentic Saviour, gracious, meek,
 And wonderful, the Lamb for sinners slain;
 Well, they may fret weak faith, make rebels glad,
 But Oh! what honest soul can wish to see
 These churches of the 'Leben' or the 'Vie'
 Get themselves towers in Christendom? how sad
 Is this wild masque of Christs, that flits athwart
 The world, 'lo here! lo there!' from all the schools
 While the true Lord of glory stands apart,
 And bides His welcome, as the madness cools,
 When they shall greet Him with fond eyes and heart,
 And test His slighted word by holier rules.

*THE YOUNG NEOLOGIST AT BETHLEHEM.**A Recommendatory Letter.*

Ye shepherds ! angels now ! who gladly heard
That midnight Word of God, in music given,
Which told of Christ's Nativity, and stirr'd
Your hearts with melodies from middle heaven ;
Tend this poor creedless youth through David's town !
Be ever near him with a silent spell,
And lead him to the spot, where, floating down
Upon your watch, the choral blessing fell !
There charm away his false and flimsy lore,
And breathe into his soul your simple creed,
The child of angels' hymns and good men's heed,
The faith of Jesus Christ, nor less nor more—
So may he all his erring steps retrace,
And bless sweet Bethlehem for her day of grace.

*HOW THE 'HIGHER CRITICISM' BLESSES
THE BIBLE.*

You say 'tis still God's Book, still true and wise—
Tho' you have shorn it of its noblest parts,
Disparag'd all its great biographies,
And left no nourishment for pining hearts;
But that's a foodless river, where the fish
Are stolen from the waters, every fin,
Whence thieves have harried all that God put in,
And spared us scarce enough to freight a dish;
So have you stolen away our food for faith—
With Moses disallow'd, and Paul review'd,
And Christ Himself by rival pens pursued,
That race each other thro' His life and death—
It irks my soul to see how bland you look,
Giving your foolish blessing to the Book!

NOTES.

JULIAN'S ATTEMPT TO BUILD ON THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE. Page 79.

THIS Sonnet is placed before the one which speaks of Diocletian, irrelevant to the chronology, and merely as a pendant to the first: both recording abortive attempts to defeat the Divine decrees; though of course Alexander put himself in no conscious opposition to them. These two Sonnets, being written independently of, and therefore with but a loose relevancy to the rest, may still be considered as, in some sort, introductory to the series.

ON THE DEATH OF TWO LITTLE CHILDREN. Page 25.

Daughters of the Hon. Gustavus and Lady Katharine Hamilton Russell, the elder of whom died by an accident during the mortal illness of her sister, who almost immediately followed her. They were both buried on the same day.

'TERMINUS.' Page 80.

The feast of the Roman God 'Terminus,' who presided over boundaries, had been selected to be the day beyond which

NOTES.

Christianity should be unknown.—*Wilberforce's Five Empires*, from *Lactantius de M. P. XVII.*

‘*GODDARD AND LYCIDAS.*’ Page 26, line 6.

‘From Wordsworth’s gentle heart.’

‘The first human consolation that the afflicted mother felt was derived from this tribute to her son’s memory; a fact which the author learned at his own residence from her daughter who visited Europe some years afterwards.’—From a note by *Wordsworth* to his *Elegiac Stanzas* on Frederick William Goddard, who was drowned in the Lake of Zurich.

‘*THE WIND-BOUND MISSION.*’ Page 53, line 7.

‘Mackenzie’s holy toil.’

Written previous to the Bishop’s death.

‘*SUMMER EVENING.*’ Page 57, line 13.

‘Made, by hope, significant for good.’

The Sonnet, page 16, is referred to.

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